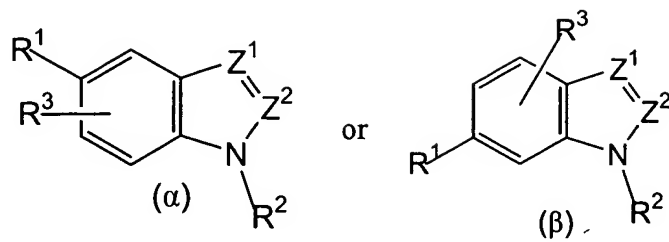


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Abstract

Compounds of the formula:

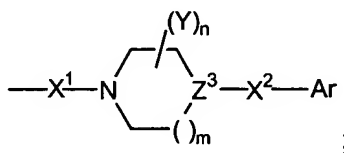


and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof,

5 wherein each of Z^1 and Z^2 is independently CR^4 or N;

where each R^4 is independently H or is alkyl (1-6C) or aryl, each of said alkyl or aryl optionally including one or more heteroatoms selected from O, S and N and optionally substituted by one or more of halo, OR, SR, NR_2 , RCO, COOR, $CONR_2$, OOCR, or $NROCR$ where R is H or alkyl (1-6C), or by one or more CN or =O, or by one

10 or more aliphatic or aromatic 5-or 6-membered rings optionally containing 1-2 heteroatoms; or

two R^4 taken together form a bridge optionally containing a heteroatom; R^1 is

15 wherein

 X^1 is CO or an isostere thereof;

m is 0 or 1;

Y is optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted aryl, or optionally substituted arylalkyl or two Y taken together may form an alkylene (2-3C) bridge;

20 n is 0 or 2;

 Z^3 is CH or N;

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X^2 is CH, CH₂ or an isostere thereof; and

Ar consists of one or two phenyl moieties directly coupled to X^2 optionally substituted by halo, nitro, alkyl (1-6C), alkenyl (1-6C), alkynyl (1-6C), CN or CF₃, or by RCO,

5 COOR, CONR₂, NR₂, OR, SR, OOCR or NROCR wherein R is H or alkyl (1-6C) or by phenyl, itself optionally substituted by the foregoing substituents;

R^2 is H, or is alkyl (1-6C) or aryl, each of said alkyl or aryl optionally including one heteroatom which is O, S or N, and optionally substituted by one or more of halo, OR, SR, NR₂, RCO, COOR, CONR₂, OOCR, or NROCR where R is H or alkyl (1-6C),
10 alkynyl (1-6C), or by one or more CN or =O, or by one or more aliphatic or aromatic 5- or 6-membered rings optionally containing 1-2 heteroatoms;

R^3 is H, halo, NO₂, alkyl (1-6C), alkenyl (1-6C), alkynyl (1-6C), CN, OR, SR, NR₂, RCO, COOR, CONR₂, OOCR, or NROCR where R is H or alkyl (1-6C)

are disclosed. These compounds are selective inhibitors of p38 α kinase.

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